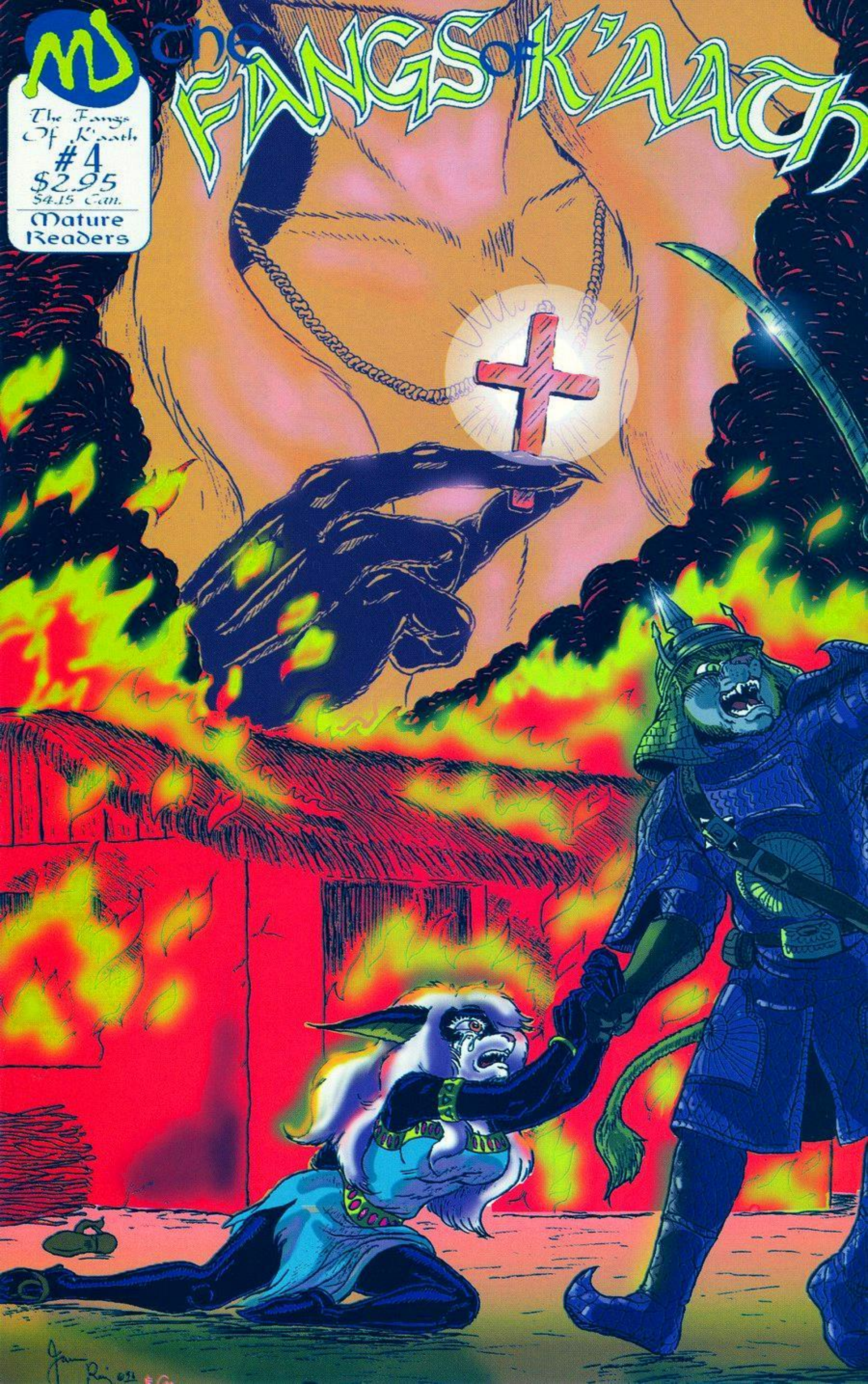
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The Fangs Of K'aath
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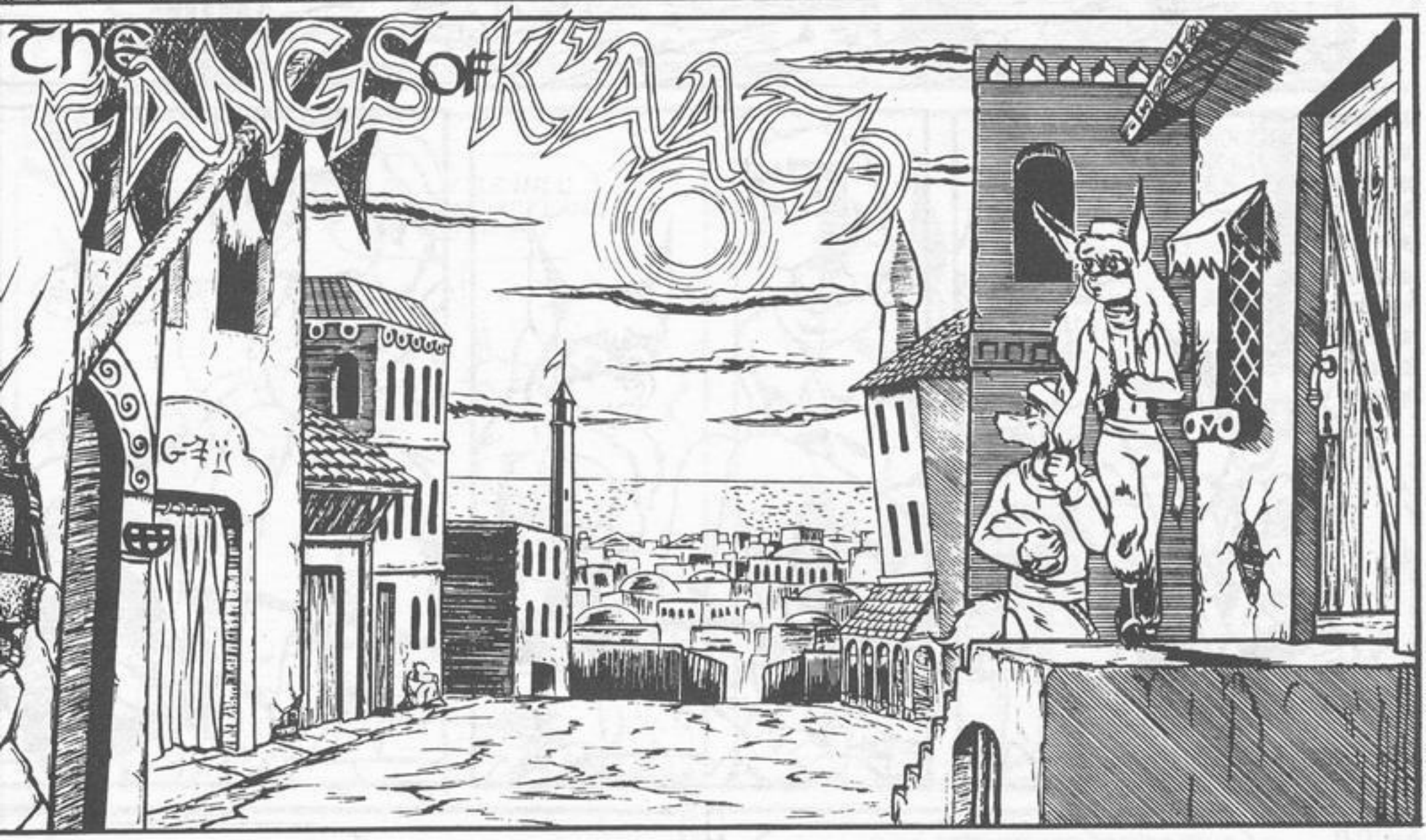
Mature Readers
The Fangs of K'aath

Previously, in... THE FANGS OF K'AACH

CLOP! CLOP! CLOPPITY! CLOP! CLOP! CLOPPITY! CLOP! CLOP! CLOPPITY

IS IT SAFE?

I - I T'INK SO.... NOT'ING MOVES. WE CAN GO.



RASCHID?

GASP

T'ERE IS NO CUP OF V'INE FOR YOU TO DRINK. NO PERFUME FOR YOUR BROW.
I-I NEED NO WINE.

I HAVE NOT SO VERY MUCH TO GIVE. BUT V'E SHALL EAT TOGET'ER, YES?
YOU NEED ALL YOUR FOOD, MY FRIEND.
PLEASE SHARE IT V'IT ME.

YOU SAY YOU'RE FROM THE HILLS. NO. I NEVER ATE HILL PEOPLE FOOD. WE LIVED LIKE WE DID IN THE CITY.
NOT EATEN HILL FOODS?

V'AT FOOLISHNESS IS T'IS? HOW CAN YOU SIT LOOKING SO WISE VIT'OUT EVER HAVING SAMPLED HEAVEN?

SO, MY LITTLE HILL SAVAGE? WHAT CLAN ARE YOU FROM?
NO CLAN. I DO NOT HAFF A CLAN.

EH? BUT I THOUGHT ALL HILL FOLK LIVED IN TRIBES.
I DO NOT LIVE IN THE HILLS. I LIVE HERE.

HERE. V'E SHARE THIS UNTIL THE COOKING'S DONE.

IT'S NOT YET PRAYER TIME. IT'S STILL TIME TO FAST.
I FORGET. V'ELL, V'E SHALL TALK UNTIL YOU FEEL ISS TIME TO EAT.

YOU DON'T PRAY, SANDHRI?
NO. I DO NOT PRAY. I DO NOT BELIEVE IN GOD.

RASCHID. MAY-MAY I TELL YOU A TALE? I HAFF NEFFER TOLD IT TO ANOTHER SOUL. BECAUSE T'ERE V'AS NEVER ANYONE TO LISTEN. NEVER ANYONE TO CARE

I CARE.
I KNOW YOU DO.

I HAD A MAMA. YOU KNOW. A MAMA V'IT LOVING HANDS AND V'ISE GRAY EYES

I ALWAYS V'ANTED TO BE LIKE MY MAMA. SHE V'AS KIND. PATIENT. SHE NEVER LIKED THE V'AY I FIBBED AND LIED

MY PAPA V'AS STRONG. OH HE V'AS SO GOOD TO ME! HE RODE A HORSE T'AT RAN FASTER THAN THE V'IND. HE V'AS THE VILLAGE HETTMAN, THE LEADER!

FOR A T'OUSAND YEARS V'E HAD SERVED THE SHAH'S V'ENEVER T'EY CALLED UPON US.

I LOVED HIM SO. GOD HOW I LOVED HIM.....

THEY V'ERE GOOD DAYS THEN. T'ERE V'AS ALV'AYS FOOD. ALV'AYS CLOTHES ALV'AYS SOMEONE TO CARE FOR ME. FAMILY AND FRIENDS. AND V'EN I V'AS GROWN, I V'OULD BE V'ATEVER I WISHED TO BE! I V'ASS THE DAUGHTER OF A HETTMAN

I V'AS IN THE BACK OF THE HOUSE IT WAS V'ARM - IT ALWAYS SMELLED SO NICE. MAMA WOULD SING AS SHE MADE THE BREAD. SHE ALV'AYS SANG SO BEAUTIFULLY....
♪♫♪!

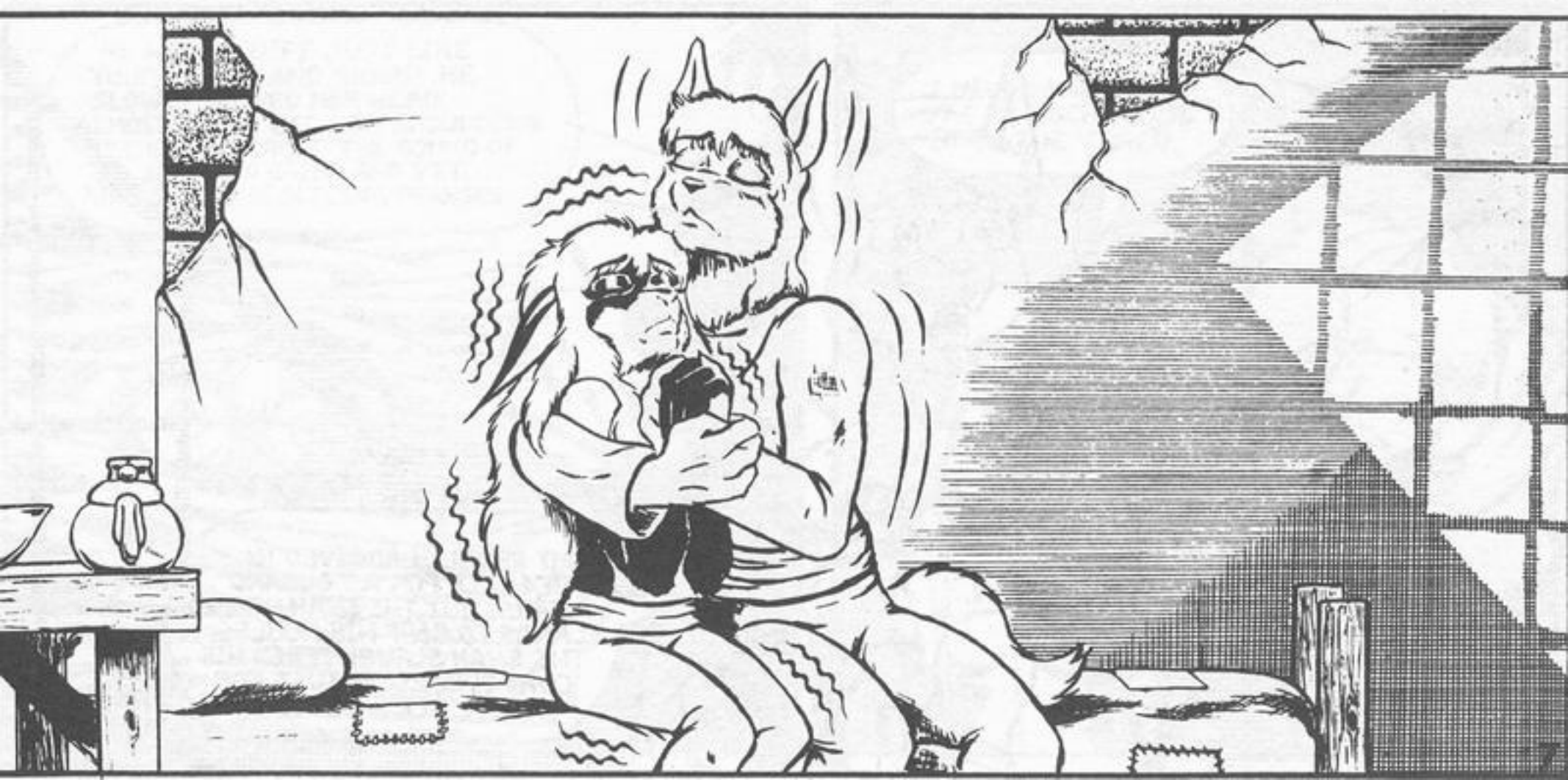
T'AT'S V'EN I HEARD THE HOOVES. LOUD - LIKE T'UNDER. I CAN NEVER SLEEP WHEN T'ERE'S BEEN LIGHTNING AND T'UNDER....

THE SOUND CAME FIRST. STRANGE, LIKE A STORM RUMBLING ON THE BREEZE. I LOOKED OUT THE WINDOW, AND THAT'S WHEN IT ALL SEEMED WRONG.

THE DOOR BROKE OPEN TO THE HOUSE. MY-MY SISTER SCREAMED AS T'OUGH A DEMON CLAWED HER! OH GOD!

I NEVER EVEN TRIED TO HELP. I DOVE BEHIND THE V'OOD PILE AND COVERED MYSELF WITH STICKS. I CRINGED IN HIDING AND V'ATCHED IT ALL.....

T'EY KILLED EVERYBODY. MAMA, MY LITTLE BROT'ER....EVERYONE BUT ME. AND V'EN IT V'AS DONE - T'EY LEFT. I V'ASS ALONE V'IT' THE CORPSES AND THE FLIES



ALL MY PEOPLE V'ERE DEAD. THE O'TER TRIBES V'OULD NOT TAKE IN V'UN SUCH AS I. I V'ANDERED TO THE CITY, AND I'VE BEEN HERE EVER SINCE.

WHO KILLED THEM? WHO KILLED THEM ALL, SANDHRI?
THE ROYAL TROOPS OF OSRA, NOBLEMEN, LED BY PRINCE ABBAS HIMSELF!

MY PEOPLE HAD LIVED IN THE HILLS FOR A T'OUSAND YEARS, BUT THE SHAH NEEDED LANDS TO GIFF HIS NOBLES. THE SHAH SLAUGHTERED HIS OWN SUBJECTS JUST FOR HIS NOBLE'S GREED!

NO!

NO-HE-HE WOULDN'T! HE COULDN'T!

WHY!

T'EY RAPED MY OLDER SISTER. I V'ATCHED T'EM DO IT, V'UN AFTER ANOT'ER, ON AND ON.

V'EN T'EY HAD FINISHED, T'EY- T'EY HELD HER BY THE HAIR AND CUT HER T'ROAT

HE HAD A KNIFE JUST LIKE YOURS, LONG AND SHARP. HE SLOWLY SAWED HER HEAD ALMOST CLEAN OFF HER SHOULDERS. I'LL NEVER FORGET THE SOUND OF IT. SLOW AND CRISP AND V'ET.... LIKE SOMEONE SLICING ORANGES

I NEVER KNEW T'ERE V'AS SO MUCH BLOOD IN ALL THE V'ORLD.

SOME OF THE V'OMEN TRIED TO RUN.

T'EY SHOT MAMA THROUGH THE NECK. SHE - SHE SAW ME AS SHE FELL!

SHE PLEADED V'IT ME TO STAY IN HIDING! TO LEAVE HER DYING IN THE DUST!

I LOOKED INTO HER EYES AND FELT MY MOTHER DIE!

MY-MY BABY BRO'TER V'AS NOT DEAD. T'EY-T'EY TOOK HIM AND SV'UNG HIM BY THE ANKLES AGAINST A V'ALL.

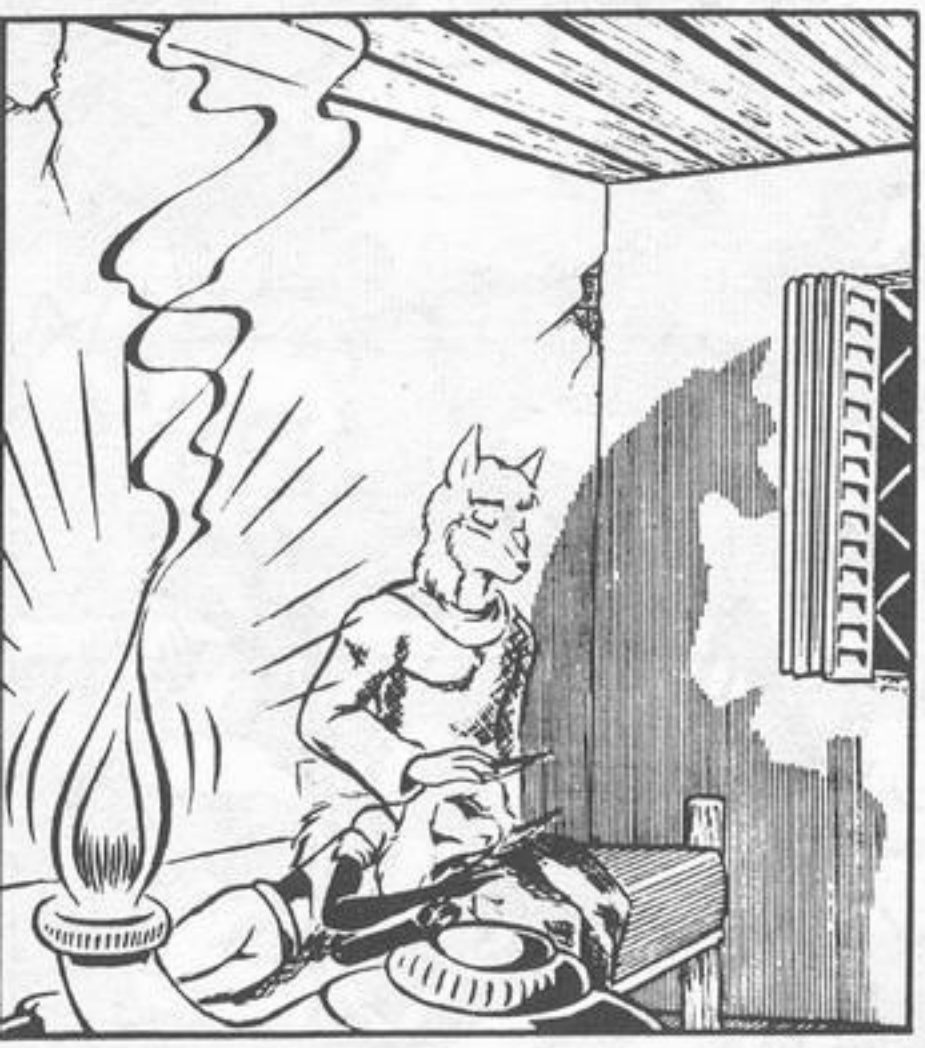
V'EN THE V'ASHER V'OMEN T'ROW V'ET CLOTHES UPON THE ROCKS, IT MAKES A SOUND JUST LIKE IT.....

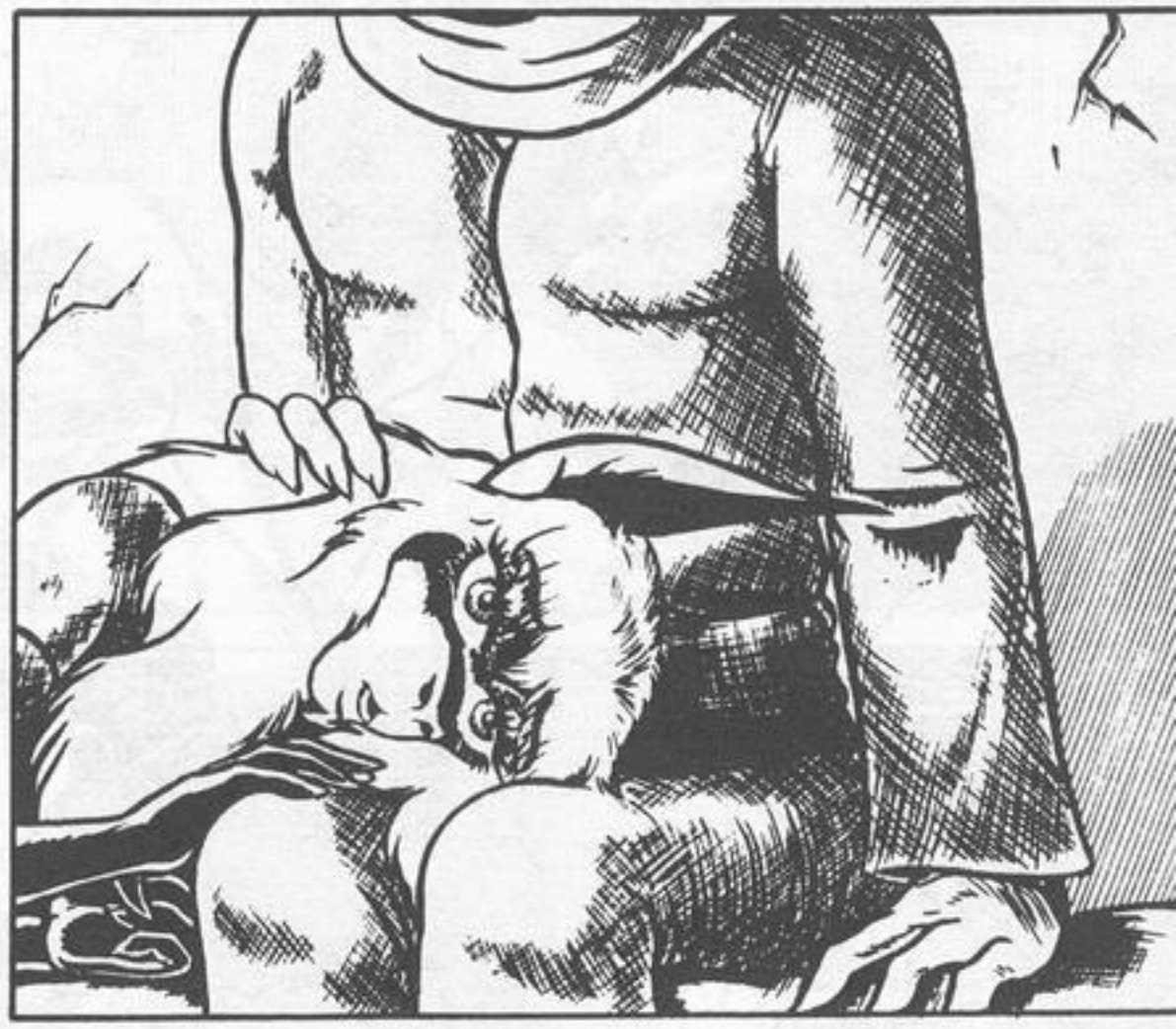
SO T'ATS V'AT I T'INK OF V'EN YOU TALK ABOUT YOUR GOD. AN ARROW SPEARING T'ROUGH MY MAMA'S NECK. BRAINS SLIDING DOWN A COTTAGE V'ALL.

T'ERE'S NO GOD. NO ANGEL AVENGED MY FAMILY. THE ONLY GOD ISS DEATH!

.....

SSSSSH LITTLE ONE. I'M SO SORRY! OH GOD I'M SO SORRY.....





SSSSSH. SLEEP A WHILE, MY LOVE. CLOSE THINE EYES AND SLEEP.
I-I HAFF SLEPT?

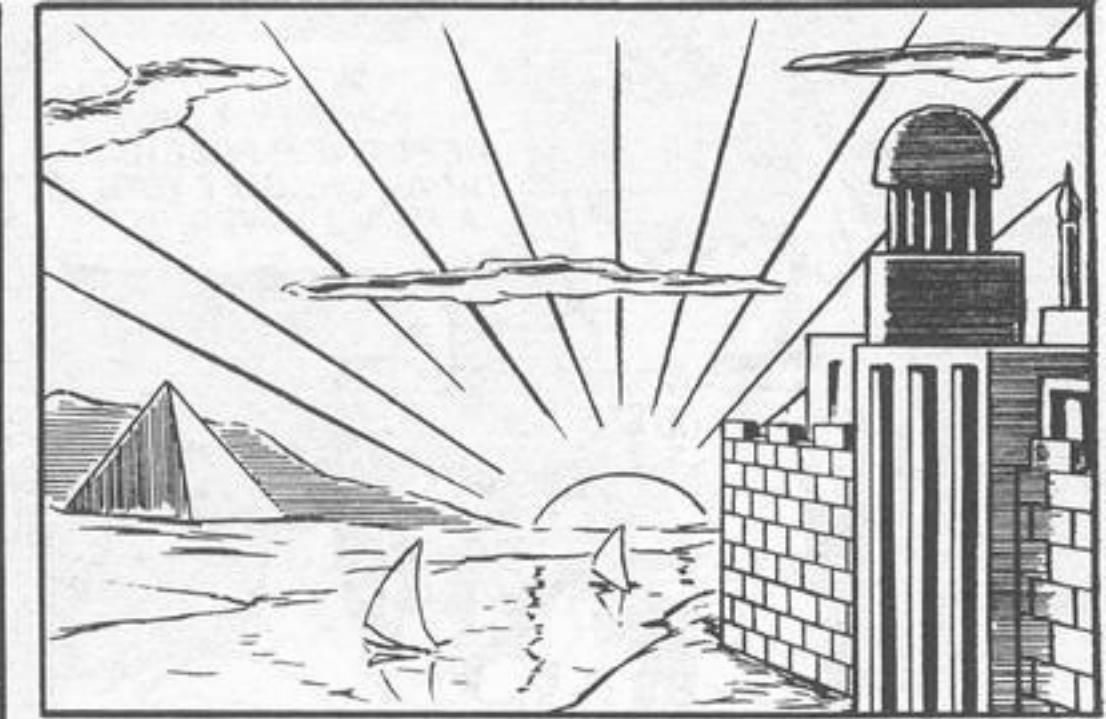
AYE-TWO HOURS OR MORE. REST AND BE AT PEACE.

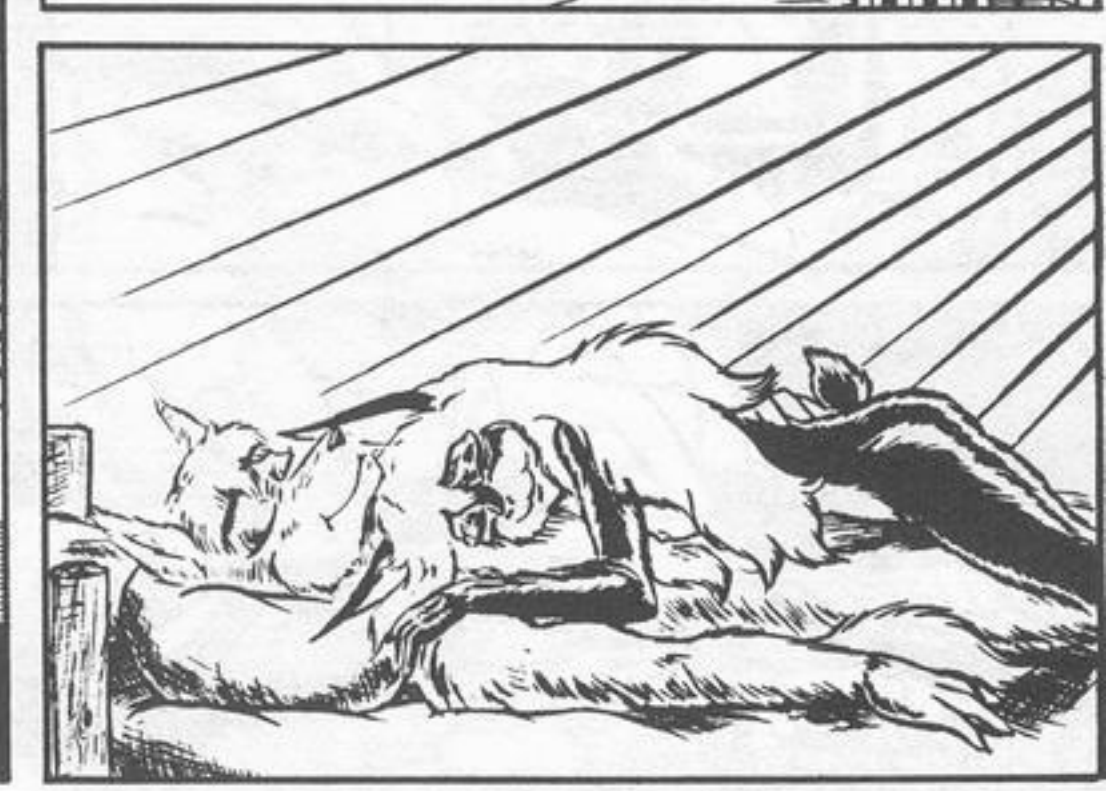
I HAFF BEEN A POOR HOSTESS.
NO, MY LOVE FOR TONIGHT THOU'ST SHOWN ME THE PRECIOUS TREASURE THAT IS SANDHRI
GASP!
.....
.....
I LOVE YOU, RASCHID.
I LOVE THEE, SANDHRI.

MY LOVE.... IN-IN ALL MY POVERTY, I HAVE KEPT ONE P-PRECIOUS THING. ONE GIFT TO GIVE A MAN I LOVED.

SHALL WE SHARE IT TOGETHER?
OH MY LOVE I SHOULD BE HONORED. BUT ONLY IF IT'S WHAT THY HEART DESIRES .....

I KEPT THE GIFT FOR THEE, MY LOVE. I KEPT THE GIFT FOR THEE.





OPEN! OPEN IN THE NAME OF THE SHAH!
WHAM!
WHAM!
WHAM!

WHAM!
WHAM!
V'AT!?
YES?
PRAY FORGIVE THE INTRUSION, YOUR HIGHNESS. THE SHAH COMMANDS THE PRESENCE AT THE PALACE.

OUT.
HIGHNESS?

OUT! GET OUT! WAIT IN THE STREET!

HIGHNESS! V'AT DID HE MEAN HIGHNESS!?

DON'T TOUCH ME! DON'T YOU DARE TOUCH ME!
SANDHRI, PLEASE!
TELL ME! TELL ME YOU BASTARD! V'AT ARE YOU?! WHO ARE YOU?!

PLEASE SANDHRI PLEASE LISTEN!
JUST WHO IN CHRIST'S NAME ARE YOU!?

I AM PRINCE RASCHID AL DINAQ

PRINCE?

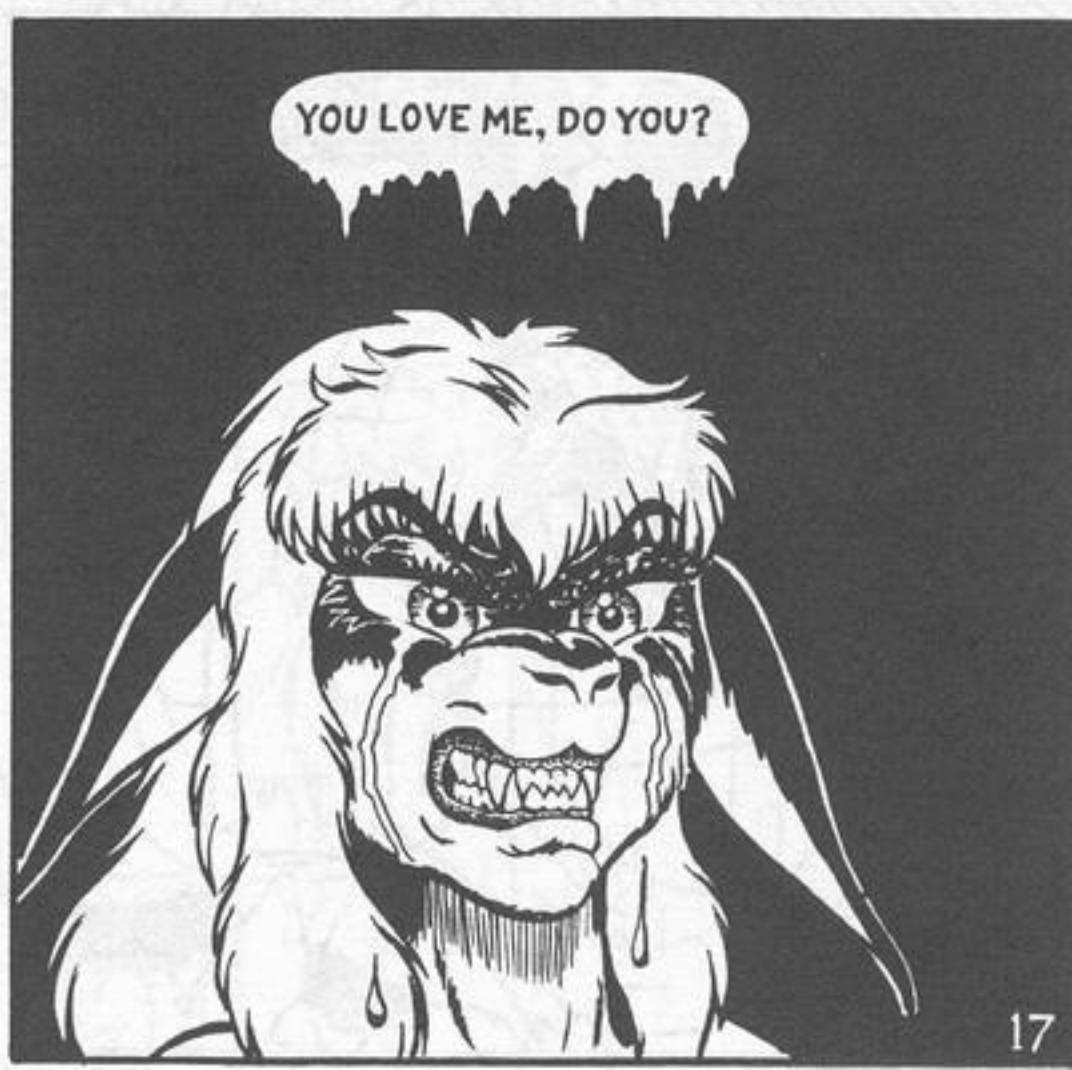
PRINCE!
I-I AM THE SECOND SON OF THE SHAH....

NO!
SOB!
I COULD'NT TELL YOU! I COULDN'T!

I WAS TERRIFIED! YOU TOLD ME HOW YOU HATED US! I WAS GOING TO TELL YOU! YOU DON'T THINK THAT AFTER YOU- THAT AFTER I

V'ELL YOU HAVE HAD YOUR PLEASURE, MY PRINCE. YOU HAFF HAD ME.

V'AS IT AN ADVENTURE. YOUR DIP INTO THE SLUMS? V'ILL YOU LAUGH AS YOU REMEMBER THE TASTE AND STENCH OF POVERTY?
NO! SANDHRI, I LOVE YOU!


YOU LOVE ME, DO YOU?

I PROSTRATED MYSELF IN THE DUST FOR COPPERS V'ILE YOU ATE OFF GOLDEN PLATTERS! V'IT' A V'AVE OF YOUR HAND YOU COULD HAVE SHOWERED ME WITH SILVER!

YOU BASTARD! POVERTY V'AS NOT ENOUGH! YOU HAFF STOLEN THE ONLY T'ING THAT V'AS STILL MINE TO GIVE!
NO!
HOC-TOOEY!

I LOVE YOU! SANDHRI I LOVE YOU!

YOU WOULDN'T LET ME GIVE YOU GIFTS - YOU WOULDN'T EVEN TAKE MY MONEY! I BEG YOU - PLEASE BELIEVE ME!
GET OUT. SLITHER BACK TO YOUR PALACE AND LEAVE ME TO MY RAGS! YOU HAVE STOLEN MY VIRGINITY, BUT MY PRIDE IS STILL MY OWN!

T'ERE! YOUR TROPHY FOR THE NIGHT. TAKE IT! TAKE IT AND GO!

NO ONE HAS EVER JUST LOVED ME FOR MYSELF, SANDHRI. NO ONE EXCEPT YOU.

PLEASE COME WITH ME. I WILL GIVE YOU EVERYTHING YOUR HEART DESIRES. I WILL LOVE THEE AS LONG AS LIFE STIRS IN MY BODY. THOU SHALT BE WIFE TO A PRINCE OF OSRA! EVERYTHING THAT IS MINE TO GIVE WILL ALL BE THINE!

JUST LOVE ME!

GET OUT.

AND IF I BEG THEE ?

I AM A PRINCE! A PRINCE! I CAN MAKE THOU LOVE ME!

YES. YOU MAY TAKE ME TO YOUR PALACE, AND YOU MAY SHAME ME V'IT YOUR BODY NIGHT BY NIGHT. BUT YOU WILL GAIN NO PLEASURE FROM ME, MY PRINCE. AND MY CURSE SHALL TEAR AT YOU V'IT EVERY LIVING BREATH.

SOB!

I LOVE THEE

SANDHRI!

IDIOT! YOU COULD HAVE BEEN KILLED!

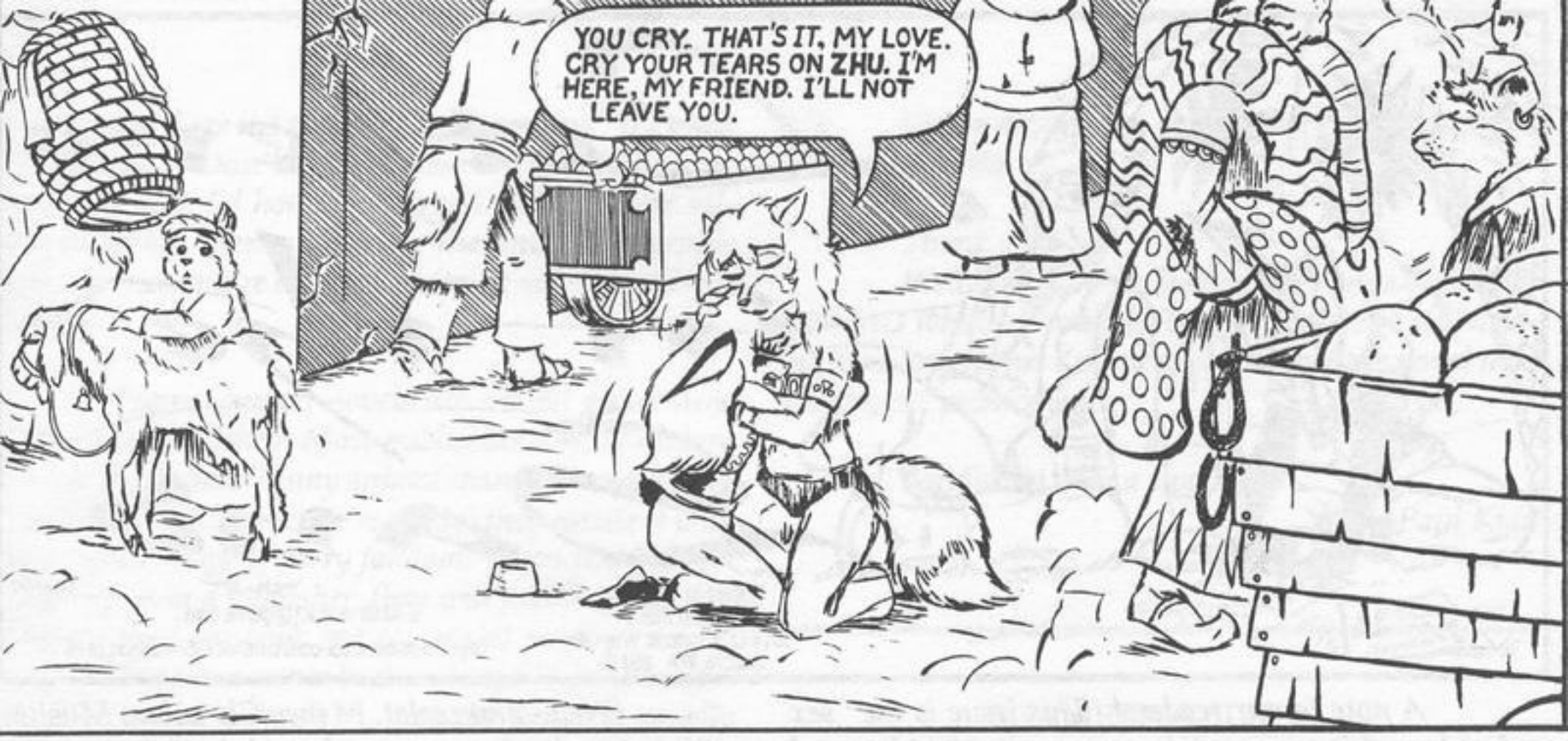
WHAT IN HELL'S NAME ARE YOU DOING?

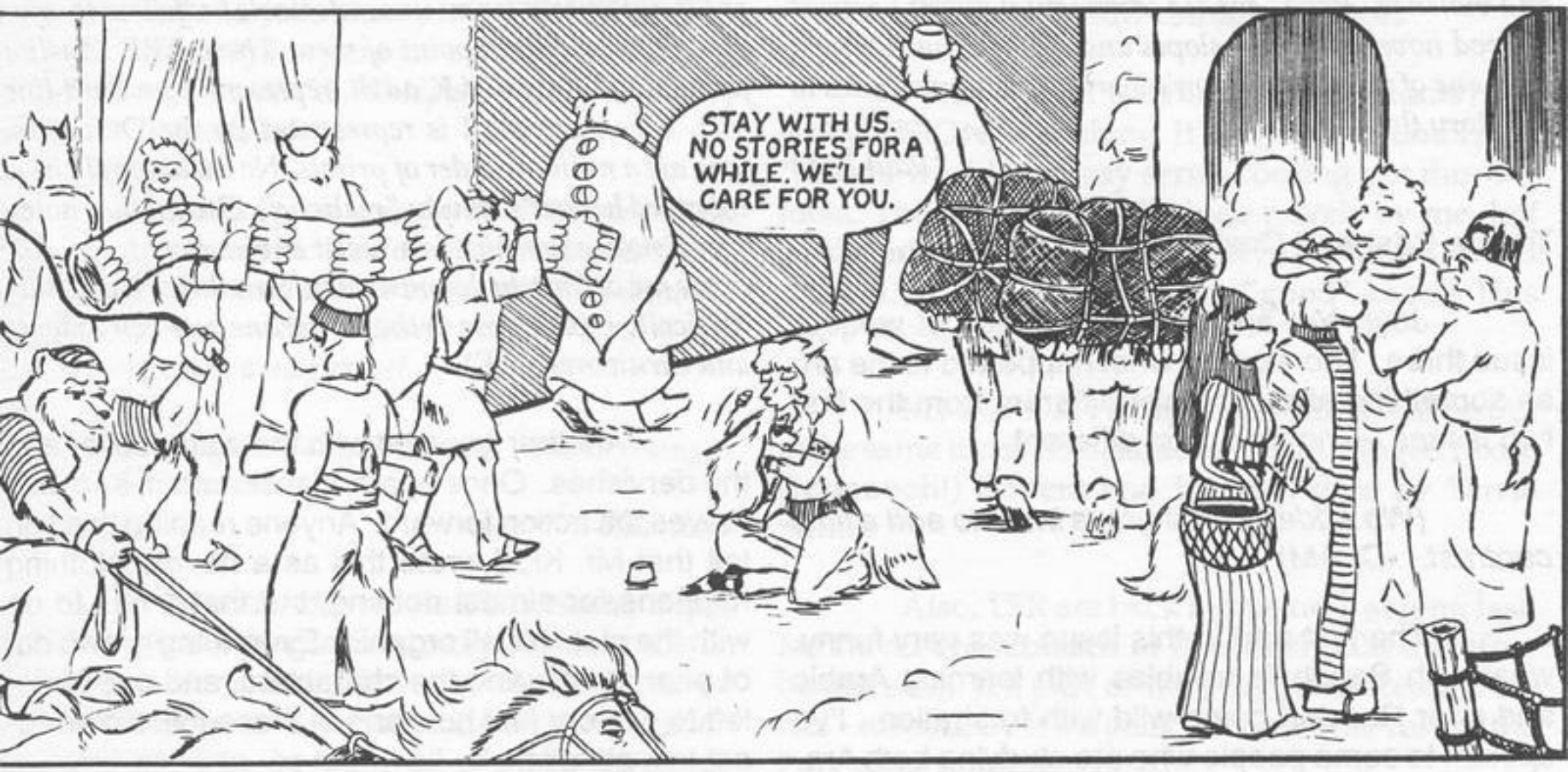
WELL? HAS THE TORAKI GOT YOUR TONGUE?

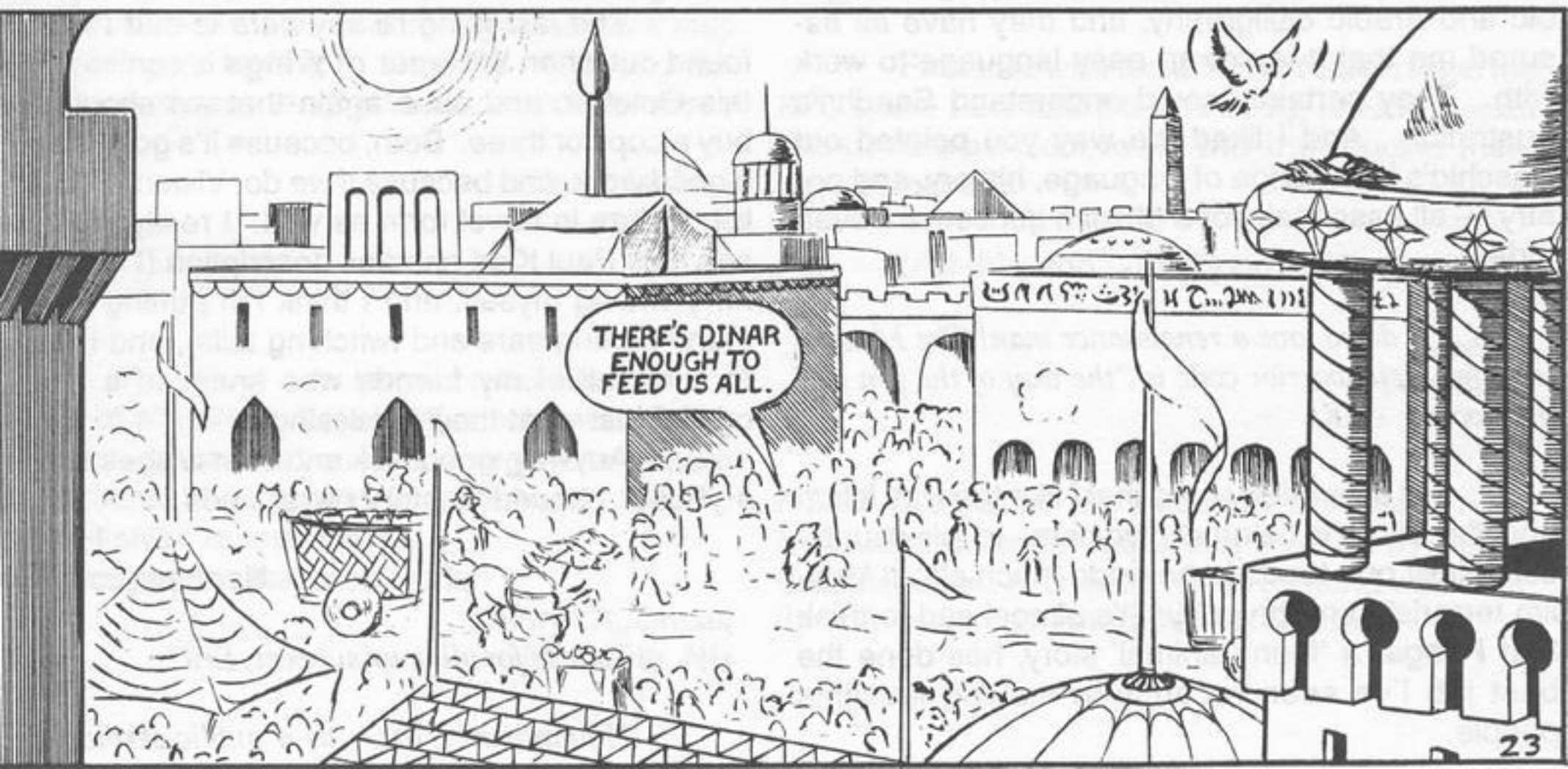
SANDHRI?

SSSSSH. SSSSSH. OH. SANDHRI.....

OH SANDHRI. SANDHRI, I'M SO SORRY.


YOU CRY. THAT'S IT, MY LOVE. CRY YOUR TEARS ON ZHU. I'M HERE, MY FRIEND. I'LL NOT LEAVE YOU.


STAY WITH US. NO STORIES FOR A WHILE. WE'LL CARE FOR YOU.


THERE'S DINAR ENOUGH TO FEED US ALL.